



Youth Employment Resource Cent

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## Preparing for the Interview

This is your time to shine! ☺ You landed an interview.

There are a few things that you need to remember to take with you, as well as mentally preparing yourself to sell yourself. Remember to put these documents in a folder or a large envelope; do not use an elaborate briefcase, it might be a turn off to your potential employer!

### Don't forget.....

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- ☞ Dress appropriately, be squeaky clean!
  - ☞ A couple of extra copies of your resume. The interviewer may require a copy of your resume at the beginning of the interview or during the interview, if the subject comes up.
  - ☞ Your reference sheet, especially if you haven't provided references on your resume.
  - ☞ Any letters of recommendation you may have, should the interviewer ask for it.
  - ☞ A small notepad or your weekly agenda and pen or pencil.
  - ☞ Identification/ your drivers license
  - ☞ When in the interview make sure to show your interest, maintain eye contact, and look happy!

## Questions you might encounter in the interview

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The following questions and answers are examples of what you may encounter in the interview. It is a good idea to prepare your own answers to these questions and be able to give the interviewer well thought out responses. If the interviewer asks you a question and you do not understand it fully, ask them if they could word it differently.

### Tell me a little about yourself

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Purpose:

- ☞ To put you at ease
- ☞ To learn from you why they should or should not hire you
- ☞ To see if your concentration is on the job that you are seeking, or on personal concerns that may interfere in your job performance
- ☞ To learn a little bit about you and your background

*Suggestions:*

Try to touch on the following 3 areas:

- ☞ Your qualifications and experience related to this position
- ☞ Your attributes, including your ability to get along with others
- ☞ Some appropriate personal information that will indicate your stability and well-rounded character. For example personal interests, community involvement and any outdoor or sport activities that you participate in.

Prepare yourself by writing out your response and practicing it so that it is 1-3 minutes long. You may have sparked further questions in some of the interesting points you have made, so be prepared to expand on what you have said about yourself.

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## Tell me about your experience with this type of work

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Purpose:

- ☞ To find out if you can do the job or not

*Suggestions:*

- ☞ If you have done this type of work state where.
- ☞ If you have done work similar to this state where and what type of training that you had. Also list any transferable skills, this will show the interviewer your interest in the position you are applying for.
- ☞ If you haven't had any work experience that is relevant show your interest in on the job training.

Remember why you left the job!!

The good:

For business reasons

- ☞ The company went out of business
- ☞ Our department moved to another town
- ☞ There was new ownership with a change in staff
- ☞ The company was downsized.
- ☞ It was seasonal work
- ☞ The hours were reduced
- ☞ The contract ended
- ☞ Other

For personal reasons

- ☞ To look after family matters
- ☞ To reassess my career path
- ☞ To find a position that required less travel time
- ☞ To take advantage of a once in a lifetime opportunity to....

The bad:

- ☞ It was time for a change
- ☞ We didn't see eye to eye
- ☞ I did a career evaluation and realized the position that I am applying for is really where I want to be at this time
- ☞ For reasons of company policy I am not at liberty to discuss this.
- ☞ Other

***Remember to stay positive of your previous work experiences no matter how bad they ended.  
A future employer is not interested in hiring anyone that bad mouths previous employers.***

## What kind of machines or equipment have you operated before?

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Purpose:

- ☞ To find out if you can operate machinery related to this position

Suggestions:

- ☞ Name the job-related equipment that you can operate giving specific brand names, types, sizes, categories and where and how you used them
- ☞ If you haven't operated the type of machinery they have, assure them that the experience you have will help you learn to operate theirs quickly.

## Can you work under pressure and/or on tight deadlines?

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Purpose:

- ☞ To see if you can work under pressure and with tight deadlines

Suggestions:

- ☞ If it's true say yes. If you enjoy challenge and being busy this applies to you
- ☞ If you are not comfortable under pressure ask them to give an example of what types of pressure you will expect on the job. This will help you decide if you are the right fit for this job.

## When are you available to work?

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Purpose:

- ☞ To find out how soon you can start
- ☞ To see your availability for the job

Suggestions:

- ☞ If you can start right away and are keen to work for their company let them know
- ☞ If you are working another job and need to give notice, let the interviewer know, but also suggest that you may be available on a flexible schedule.

## What are your Strengths/ Weaknesses?

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Purpose:

- ☞ To find out how well you know yourself
- ☞ To find out reasons for hiring you
- ☞ To find out if you believe in yourself and are confident

Suggestions:

- ☞ List some of your good points and how they relate to your job work skills. Give some on the job examples when something positive happened.

## Illegal questions – Know your human rights

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Did you know that there are topics that it is illegal for an employer to discriminate against you.

- ☞ Race
- ☞ Colour
- ☞ Ancestry
- ☞ Place of origin
- ☞ Political Belief
- ☞ Religion
- ☞ Marital Status
- ☞ Physical or mental disability
- ☞ Age
- ☞ Sex {including sexual harassment and pregnancy}
- ☞ Conviction for a criminal or summary conviction charge that is unrelated to the employment

If you are asked an illegal question it is not only important to know your rights, but also how to respond appropriately to the question. If it is an employer that you truly want to work for indicate a willingness to show your suitability for the position without compromising your rights.

Counter the question with a question:

- ☞ “Could you tell me how (age, marital status, etc) might have a bearing on the job I am applying for?”
- OR
- ☞ “That is a very interesting question. I would be happy to answer it if you could tell me the reason for asking it.”

## Wrapping up the Interview

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“Do you have any questions for us?” is usually the way that the interviewer will end the interview. Come prepared with a couple of questions as this will show your interest in the position.

### Questions about the job

- ☞ Why is this position open?
- ☞ Where does this position fit into the organization?
- ☞ Where might this position lead?
- ☞ What are the best and worst things about the job?
- ☞ What are your expectations of me?
- ☞ Describe a typical day for me
- ☞ What improvements would you like to see in this position?
- ☞ Is any training required?
- ☞ Is there a written job description, may I see it? May I have a copy?
- ☞ When would this position start?
- ☞ When will you make your decision on this posting?
- ☞ Will I hear either way if I get the job or not?

*Remember to Thank the Interviewer for their time, shake hands and make eye contact.*

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